



# InTouch

April - June 2004

Volume Ten - Number Two



*County Executive Douglas M. Duncan announces gang prevention task force. With the Executive are, left to right: Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson, Police Chief Tom Manger, Chairman Russ Campbell of Mr. Duncan's African American Advisory Group.*

## Gang Prevention Task Force

On February 26, 2004, County Executives Douglas M. Duncan and Jack Johnson announced the creation of a Bi-County Task Force on Gang Activity at the Community Center in Langley Park.

**See GANGS on page 5**

## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration

Congress has designated May of each year as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Each May, the President signs a Proclamation calling for all Americans to pause and appreciate the contributions that their fellow countrymen and women of Asian and Pacific descent have made to the history and society of our great nation.

**See ASIAN on page 4**

## Annual Juneteenth Celebration

Montgomery County will sponsor its eighth community celebration of "Juneteenth" at the Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African Art Gallery on June 17, 2004. The County Executive and Council will present a Joint Proclamation commemorating the event. A tour of the museum starts at 6:00 with a formal program at 7:00 PM. A reception follows. All events are free and open to the public.

Juneteenth developed over the years after the end of the Civil War as liberation day for slaves. President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 freeing slaves in the seceding states. However, Juneteenth originated from the landing of the Union Army led by General Gordon Granger in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865, where about a quarter million slaves were finally freed. Over time, the celebratory name "Juneteenth" developed from "June Nineteenth."

The 30 month gap is explained by several legends that have been passed down through the ages. The first legend is of a Union soldier murdered while carrying news of liberation to Texas. Another is that the news was deliberately withheld by slave owners to maintain laborers on plantations. The last has federal troops allowing plantation owners to benefit from the unpaid labor of slaves before allowing them to go free.

Whether parts or all of these legends are true does not take away from the important symbolism of Juneteenth as a day of liberation and celebration for the African American community. For more information about Montgomery County's Juneteenth events, call Christine Clarke at (240) 777-2500.

**For more information, visit  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)**

# Message from the County Executive



DOUGLAS M. DUNCAN

Dear Friends:

The Office of Community Outreach (OCO) continues its outreach efforts to provide information about County services to all residents and communities. As the most diverse jurisdiction in Maryland and one of the most diverse communities in the country, Montgomery County is dedicated to the fundamental proposition that multiculturalism strengthens our society. As a County, we embrace individuals from all backgrounds and welcome them as integral parts of our community.

In terms of specific programs, both the African American Health Program and the Latino Health Initiative received 10% increases in my budget for Fiscal Year 2005. I also placed \$350,000 in the budget to start the Asian American Health Initiative.

This increased funding in the Department of Health and Human Services will help expand Montgomery County's ability to provide access to health care for all residents.

In the area of pedestrian safety, the County has purchased a number of blinking lights which will be distributed through partnerships with community and faith-based organizations to help reduce the number of accidents involving residents walking on the County's roads. These lights can be clipped to clothing and will help make pedestrians more visible to motorists at night. In addition, the County has translated into several languages a Pedestrian Safety brochure that will remind pedestrians to exercise caution on the roads.

In February, I joined County Executive Jack Johnson of Prince George's County to create a Bi-County Task Force on Gang Activity. Working with parents, educators, law enforcement agencies, youth groups and community and faith-based organizations, the Task Force will present its report in September with recommendations on ways to reduce gang activity in the region. Gang activity is not limited to any community or geographic region. Successful strategies must address every aspect of a youth's life. I welcome your input and recommendations so we can work together to end gang activity. Please call the Office of Community Outreach at (240) 777-2500 with comments or questions on the gang prevention task force.

Douglas M. Duncan  
County Executive

**Douglas M. Duncan**, County Executive  
**Bruce Romer**, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Parker Hamilton**, Assistant CAO

Office of Community Outreach:

**Debbie Resnick**, Manager

**Shu-Ping Chan**, Asian Pacific American Liaison

**Tina Clarke**, African American/Black Liaison

**Joe Heiney-Gonzalez**, Latino/Hispanic Liaison

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Submissions, comments and event announcements can be emailed to: [InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov). Those received by the first of March, June, September or December will be considered for the next issue of *In Touch*. Articles may be reproduced or translated into other languages with attribution.

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## Residents Urged to be Cautious of "Bounty Hunters"

Residents are urged to use reason and caution if confronted by "bounty hunters" – individuals usually hired by bail-bonds companies to capture criminal defendants.

In February, Montgomery County police arrested four individuals for false imprisonment, impersonating a police officer, burglary and other crimes in connection with a series of complaints by residents who claim that the four, acting as bounty hunters, broke into their homes or otherwise harassed them under the guise of detaining a defendant. Most of the complaints came from members of the Latino community.

By law, bounty hunters are allowed to detain and bring criminal defendants to court. A good percentage of criminal defendants are released on bail, a concept from Medieval England that allows those accused of a crime to be released prior to trial. Bail is the security placed in return for the release. It is forfeited should the defendant fail to appear on the appointed court date.

A commercial bonds company is often hired to put up the bail in return for a fee and other collateral. Many bonds companies use bounty hunters to track down defendants who fail to return to court.

Little known is that the bond relationship is purely contractual, and if a bonds company at any time fears that a defendant is unlikely to appear, even before the court date, the company can legally revoke the contract and seek the defendant's immediate capture. Bounty hunters are often called in at this point, who are allowed to use weapons to affect an arrest.

Many legitimate bounty hunters share operational information with local police. It is normal policy for Montgomery County police to show identification and clearly announce that they are indeed police when entering a home.

Police urge residents to call 911 when it is reasonably safe to do so when someone breaks into their home claiming to be a bounty hunter looking for a defendant. Residents can also call the non-emergency police response line, (301) 279-8000.

A community meeting on bounty hunters is scheduled for Tuesday, June 29, 2004 at 6:30 PM in the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street in Rockville. Residents are encouraged to attend to learn more about this issue. For more information, please call (240) 777-2524.

Under current Maryland law, bounty hunters are not licensed or regulated, and do not require a background check. Anyone can enter the profession without having to receive legal or tactical training.



## County Offers "Strobe Globes" to Enhance Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian safety is a countywide concern for all communities. In recent years, growing numbers of pedestrians have suffered serious or fatal injuries while walking on the County's roads.

To help reverse this trend, Montgomery County is working with the Council of Governments (COG) and other multi-jurisdictional agencies to promote educational materials that will raise awareness of simple measures that pedestrians can take to enhance their safety.

In addition to printing bilingual safety brochures, the County has purchased a number of "strobe globes" to help motorists see pedestrians at night. These small battery operated blinking lights can be clipped on to clothing or backpacks to help make pedestrians more visible while walking in the dark.

Studies have shown that with the lights, pedestrians become visible to motorists at three times the distance. The County is partnering with faith-based, senior and community organizations to distribute these lights at reduced costs.

The strobe globes, however, are only designed to enhance pedestrian visibility at night. Common sense still dictates in ensuring safety while walking on the roads.

For the safety brochures, attention was given to using nonverbal universal signage to promote ease in understanding. In addition, the brochures are available in Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese.

For more information about the pedestrian safety campaign, safety brochures or partnering with the County to distribute strobe globes, please call (240) 777-2500.

## Tina Clarke Receives Recognitions

Christine Clarke, the County Executive's African American Liaison, recently received two recognitions for her lifetime of work to the community. The first was from the County's Human Rights Commission for her outstanding service in fighting for civil rights and human rights. The 2004 Human Rights Hall of Fame recognition ceremony was held at Black Rock Center for the Performing Arts on March 11, 2004.

The second recognition came from the Montgomery County Branch of the NAACP. Tina was formally recognized at the Chapter's 20th Freedom Fund Dinner on April 25, 2005.

A native of Montgomery County, Tina has been at the forefront of working for equal justice for all since she was a young girl. A member of numerous boards, commissions and community organizations, she has exemplified the meaning of public service. Congratulations Tina!

## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

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Celebrations around the nation take place to mark this occasion. Locally, Montgomery County held its celebration in conjunction with a health fair for the Asian American community on May 23, 2004. The formal program portion of the day included presentation of a Joint Proclamation by the County Executive and County Council. Throughout the day, physicians, nurses and other health professionals provided screenings and educational materials on various cancers, diabetes, high blood pressure and other medical conditions. Medical professionals from various specialties were present, along with practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine and Indian Ayurveda therapy.

The keynote speaker for the program was Dr. T.K. Li, Director of the Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Li, a physician, researcher and health care administrator, spoke on the barriers facing Asian Americans in accessing health care.

Agencies within the County's Department of Health and Human Services attended to provide information, along with organizations assisting victims of domestic violence. The federal government was also present to provide information on Medicare, Medicaid and related programs.

## Community Outreach Forum

Since its inception last year, the Community Outreach Forum has held monthly meetings and a retreat to further coordinate the outreach efforts of County departments and agencies.

For the past ten months at locations around the County, Forum members have convened to share information on new strategies, best practices and creative outreach efforts to ensure that all residents and communities in Montgomery County have full access to services. The Forum is open to County employees whose responsibilities are to connect residents to County services and programs. Other government entities are also members, including municipalities and congressional offices that serve County residents. Corporations and community organizations are regular guests at Forum meetings.

With its mission statement approved and work plan about to be announced, the Forum is focusing on identifying and locating isolated communities and individuals. The Forum sees isolation being caused by barriers of geography, race, language, culture, transportation, physical or mental ability, income, technology or public infrastructure. In addition, isolation can come about because communities have faced historical under-representation, or isolation can be temporary situations resulting from such phenomena as weather or national emergencies or disruptions in public services arising from accidents, labor stoppages or power outages.

The Forum is working with the County's Emergency Management Team to explore appropriate responses to different emergency contingencies in the future.

As part of its mission, the Forum actively seeks opportunities to speak with residents to discuss community concerns and needs. As one of the Guiding Principles for County employees, the Forum is working to ensure that good customer service is provided to all segments of the County's population. The most fundamental aspect of good customer service is reducing and eliminating barriers to accessing services.

For more information on the Community Outreach Forum, call Debbie Resnick at (240) 777-2500.

**We welcome your comments  
on In Touch. Please email  
[InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
or call (240) 777-2500.**



## **Gang Prevention Task Force**

*from page 1*

Recognizing that gang activity is an increasing regional problem, with estimates of over 70 gangs operating in the area, Mr. Duncan wanted to work in collaboration with Mr. Johnson of Prince George's County to address this issue together. Co-chairs of the Montgomery County portion of the Task Force are Police Chief Tom Manger and Health and Human Services Director Carolyn Colvin.

Henry Montes and Henry Quintero, who co-chair the County Executive's Latin American Advisory Committee, presented a report to Mr. Duncan in January documenting increases in gang activity in the area. Their report led to the Task Force's creation.

Although recent media focus has been on the Latino community, gang activity is not limited to any one ethnic group or geographic area.

To obtain critical information on gangs from all communities, the Task Force will hold a Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, June 22, 2004 at 6:00 PM at Blair High School, 51 University Blvd. East in Silver Spring. The public is invited to attend and speak. Interpreters will be available.

The Task Force's Steering Committee coordinates the work of three Subcommittees – Prevention, Intervention and Suppression.

The Steering Committee oversees the final report and recommendations that are scheduled for completion in September 2004. The Prevention Subcommittee focuses on gang recruitment in schools and communities and identifies strategies to prevent youths from associating with gangs.

The Intervention Subcommittee addresses behaviors of at-risk youth and will recommend constructive alternatives to joining a gang. Lastly, the Suppression Subcommittee identifies enforcement strategies to contain, reduce and end illegal activities of gang members.

An interactive webpage dedicated to the Task Force is available for residents to access up-to-date information about accomplishments, scheduled events and meetings. Through this webpage, residents can also provide comments or recommendations. Most importantly, individuals and families can provide information anonymously through the website on the recruiting efforts and illegal gang activities in the region.

This webpage includes information for families on warning signs that a child may be considering or may have already joined a gang. The webpage is linked to both the Montgomery County and Prince George's County websites.

For more information and links to the Bi-County Task Force on Gang Activity, including notices of meetings, visit [www.co.pg.md.us](http://www.co.pg.md.us), [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov), or call Joe Heiney-Gonzalez at (240) 777-2525 or William Campos at (301) 440-1577.

## **County Continues with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

In October 2003, County Executive Douglas M. Duncan and Chief Administrative Officer Bruce Romer convened a Diversity Summit for department and agency directors to reinforce the administration's commitment to diversity. A large part of this commitment is the continuation of a County wide policy to provide services to individuals who have limited English proficiency.

The County Executive's Office of Community Outreach (OCO) is coordinating the County's LEP implementation. All department directors have designated a representative to serve on a committee that is responsible for implementing the formal LEP work plan. Establishing a written plan is an important part of LEP policy.

The guidelines also include assessing the size and language needs of LEP communities, training staff on how best to work with LEP customers and continuous monitoring and periodic reassessments of how the plan is being implemented.

Recognizing that many departments are already translating documents and providing interpreter services to LEP customers, departmental representatives are meeting to share best practices and strategies on how to improve access.

Individual departments will decide on the use of a tally survey that can obtain detailed estimates of the number of LEP customers each department sees each year.

Teams are being established to provide formal training to County staff on LEP policy and protocols on working with customers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

A resource team is providing assistance to the departmental representatives to establish training materials, specific implementation procedures and researching LEP plans already established in other jurisdictions.

A stakeholders committee will contact community organizations and individuals to help assess the County's efforts in providing access for LEP customers. Part of the process will be the use of "mystery shoppers" who will pose as LEP customers to provide feedback on the service they receive. For more information or to make recommendations on the County's LEP policy implementation, please call Shu-Ping Chan at (240) 777-2524.

## **Executive Increases Funding for Community Health Programs**

Recognizing the growth of the diverse populations in Montgomery County and the health needs of these communities, County Executive Douglas M. Duncan proposed in his FY 2005 budget increases of about 10% to both the African American Health Program and the Latino Health Initiative. In addition, the budget proposal for the County's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) includes \$350,000 for a new program to assist Asian Americans in accessing health care and in eliminating any remaining barriers that this community may face in obtaining equal medical services. The County Council approved all of these funding proposals.

The Asian American Health Initiative came about when organizations representing a wide cross section of the County's Asian American community met formally for the first time in October 2003 to initiate a program that emulates the African American Health Program and the Latino Health Initiative. The County's Asian American community constitutes about 13.0% of the population. The African American and Latino communities make up about 14.1% and 12.6% of the County, respectively.

Part of the Asian American Health Initiative budget will be used to create a position in HHS with responsibilities to identify and address health disparities that Asian Americans may face. Because certain medical conditions are genetically inherited, some diseases are empirically more prevalent in specific population groups. For example, the per capita rates of such conditions as cervical cancer and hepatitis B are higher in the Asian American community than in other populations. The same is true for sickle cell anemia in the African American community. These health programs help raise awareness among health care professionals and community members about the higher risks that communities may face in fighting specific diseases.

Major portions of the budgets are for programming. The role of the programs is to conduct further research on health disparities and to initiate programs to further educate the community about available treatments and healthier lifestyles.

For example, even before the Asian American Health Initiative received any funding, community organizations held a health fair for the Asian American community on May 23 as part of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. An African American men's health summit was held on June 12, 2004 at the Holiday Inn in Silver Spring. Similar programs are scheduled for the Latino community.

Funding for the Asian American Health Initiative will also be steered to the Pan Asian American Volunteer Clinic to expand their hours and to recruit more volun-

teers. Currently this clinic, housed in the County's 2000 Dennis Avenue facility in Silver Spring, is opened only one evening a week. There is currently a waiting list lasting several weeks to be seen at the Clinic. With additional funding, the Clinic looks to double its hours and to increase the number of volunteers who serve community members in an environment that is both linguistically and culturally welcoming.

For more information on the African American Health Program, call Lizzie James at (240) 777-1055. Information on the Latino Health Program can be obtained by calling Sonia Mora at (240) 777-1779. For information on the Asian American Health Initiative, call Shu-Ping Chan at (240) 777-2524.

***The County Needs You!  
Consider Joining a Board,  
Committee or Commission.  
To receive vacancy  
announcements,  
Call (240) 777-2500.***

## **New Police Chief Continues Community Meetings**

Even before taking over the top spot in Montgomery County's Police Department in February, Chief Tom Manger stressed the importance of community policing. Manger brings with him over 27 years of experience on the police force in Virginia's Fairfax County, a jurisdiction very similar in size and diversity to Montgomery County. As Fairfax Chief, Manger was known as an advocate of building strong relationships with the community so officers can perform their duties more efficiently, effectively and safely.

Chief Manger's commitment to community policing continues with the many outreach meetings he has already held since beginning in Montgomery County. The Chief will also continue to meet formally with his liaison committees to the African American, Asian American and Latino communities.

***See POLICE on Page 7***

## **Police continued from Page 6**

The African American Police Liaison Committee has already held several meetings with Manger to discuss community issues. The Committee will continue to be a resource to the Chief, who has committed to attending as many monthly meetings with the Committee as his schedule allows. Discussions with Chief Manger have so far focused on enhancing communications and on training. The Committee offered its assistance to further develop the Department's diversity training curriculum so all officers and recruits are kept abreast of community concerns.

Chief Manger and Capt. Tom Fitzpatrick, Director of the Department's Community Services Division, will also be meeting with liaison committees representing the Latino and Asian American communities. In addition to communications and training, Latino and Asian American leaders will bring issues that all new immigrants face in the area of public safety.

For many new Americans, language and cultural differences, unfamiliarity with the role of police and the issue of trust are major barriers to effective community policing.

Chief Manger is committed to working with all communities to ensure that public safety is not diminished because of any misunderstandings. For more information, call the Police Department's Community Services Division at (301) 840-2585.



*The Committee for Ethnic Affairs meets with County Executive Douglas M. Duncan. Left to Right: Ari Brooks, Siham Eldadah, Mrs. Fan, Ismail Kenessy, Shou-Shan Fan, Jennifer Sinclair Hankerson, Soonhoon Ahn, Irene Coleman, B. Alexis Kohn, Renuka Sahay, Awo Sarpong Ansu, Lubna Ejaz, County Executive, Jeredine Williams.*

## **Committee for Ethnic Affairs**

The County Executive's Committee for Ethnic Affairs installed new officers in January and presented its 2003 annual report to the County Executive. The Committee also requested, and received, a budget of \$2,500 from the Executive for its operations in Fiscal Year 2005.

Outgoing chair Renuka Sahay and incoming chair Lubna Ejaz presented the report outlining the activities of the Committee during the past year. Events included lectures, cultural celebrations, performances and other gatherings to promote the rich cultural backgrounds of Montgomery County's diverse communities.

The Committee held a retreat in May facilitated by Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Parker Hamilton for current and new members to discuss plans for the next year. The retreat produced a mission statement for the Committee, as well as plans to increase outreach efforts to provide information and services to communities that have faced historic isolation or under-representation.

In addition, the Committee is establishing a subcommittee to focus on issues and challenges facing recent immigrants. It will work with the Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity and the Police Department to provide coordinated communication about County services. It will focus outreach to organizations advocating for recent immigrants to Montgomery County.

For more information on the Committee for Ethnic Affairs, contact Debbie Resnick at 240/777-2500.



# CommunityEvents June-July

**June 17, 2004 Juneteenth Celebration** – 6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Formal Program. Celebration of day recognized by African American community as liberation for slaves near the end of the Civil War. Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African Art Gallery. Call Tina Clarke at (240) 777-2500.

**June 22, 2004 Town Hall Meeting hosted by Montgomery County Gang Prevention Task Force** – 6:00 PM. The public is encouraged to attend meeting to present viewpoints on how to reduce and stop gang activity in the region. Montgomery Blair High School, 51 University Blvd East, Silver Spring. Visit County website with link to task force at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov). Call Joe Heiney Gonzalez at (240) 777-2525.

**July 17, 2004 Latino Fest – All Day.** Montgomery County Fair Grounds, 16 Chestnut Street near Route 355, Gaithersburg. Call (240) 777-2525 for more information.

Office of Community Outreach  
Offices of County Executive Douglas M. Duncan  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

## **Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity**

Montgomery County's Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity offers many free classes, events, seminars and programs. Topics include:

- Immigration and citizenship
- Small business development
- Tax assistance
- Free health screening
- How to use a computer and the internet
- How to find a job and write a resume
- Drug and alcohol prevention
- Free legal help on civil cases.

Please call (240) 777-4940 or visit the website [www.GilchristCenter.org](http://www.GilchristCenter.org) for more information and class schedules. The Gilchrist Center is located at 11319 Elkin Street in Wheaton, near University Boulevard, and can be reached by public transportation.

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